Depositions

Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum

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CHAPTER TWO

Crucifixes with Movable Arms

The Deposition rite was never acknowledged in the liturgy of Rome. It was shaped on a local level and reflected desires not explicitly accounted for in the official documents. The unorthodoxy modern historians tend to associate with late medieval images is a superstitious belief in their sentience and mobility. The Deposition rite encouraged no such thing. On the contrary, I will suggest, it made an annual spectacle of nothing so much as the image's lack of life. Toward the end of the thirteenth century, a special crucifix with movable arms was invented specifically to facilitate the staging of this spectacle (figure 21). The sculpture's movable arms allowed the same image seen hanging on the cross to be lifted off the cross and to be fitted into a narrow coffer. This had the predictable effect of making the reenactment of the deposition more realistic. But the mobility of this crucifix also did something more surprising, in fact, just the opposite of what one might expect: it called attention to the fact that—as moveable as it may be—this image is powerless to move itself.

The Crucifix

In the early Christian period, the cross was a triumphant symbol of Christ's victory over death and the devil. Before the fifth century, the crucifix—a cross with an image of the body of Christ fixed upon it—only appeared in narrative depictions of the crucifixion scene. When isolated crucifixes began to be made in the fifth century, they represented the living Christ. Only in the ninth century, following the Byzantine image controversy and perhaps in response to the

Figure 21. Swabian, *Crucifix with Movable Arms* (ca. 1520) from the Sacristy of St. John the Baptist, Memmingen, Germany, polychromed wood, height 115 cm. (Photo: Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte.)

heresy of monophysitism (the belief that Christ has only one nature: the divine) did Byzantine artists begin consistently representing Christ on the cross with his eyes closed to indicate that he is dead.[1] Crucifixes with the dead Christ appeared at this time in the West as well, although the living crucified Christ persisted there alongside the newer iconography.[2] The ninth-century Irish philosopher Johannes Scotus Eriugena apostrophizes the peculiar death that made it difficult for some to picture Christ lifeless even as he hung on the cross: "O death, death of life, if it is to be called death and not life / I would not dare to call that which supplies life death."[3]

Crucifixes were being made on a monumental scale at least by the late tenth century, which is about when the Deposition rite was first recorded, as far as we know. These crucifixes sometimes carried the living and sometimes the dead Christ, the difference between them being little more than that between open and closed eyes. Only in the thirteenth century did artists begin to graphically represent the suffering and death of Christ on the cross, completing the gradual historical transition from the theomorphic to the anthropomorphic crucifix.[4]

Reading accounts of the Deposition rite, it is often difficult to say what kind of object or image was buried. The *Monastic Agreement* refers to a *sancta crux*, an ambiguous term that can designate either an aniconic cross or a crucifix with an image of Christ's body on it.[5] The term *crucifixus*, which also appears in the documents, would seem to refer to the latter.[6] Even less ambiguous are the terms *imago crucifixi*, *imaginem*, and *imago Domini*.[7] And entirely unambiguous are those cases where the image is described: in Durham Cathedral, for example, one hears of "a goodly large Crucifix, all of gold, of the picture of our Sauiour Christ nailed uppon the crosse."[8] Although the aniconic cross probably never entirely ceased to be used in the Deposition rite, it is likely that figurative crucifixes came to predominate over time and that the representation of the *deadness* of the body became increasingly graphic, as was the case with crucifixion iconography in general.

The invention of the crucifix with movable arms belongs to this trend toward an ever more realistic image of the crucified body. To

strengthen its realism, the movable crucifix's simple hinge-mechanisms were sometimes concealed with paint or parchment or both, as are those of a nearly life-size sculpture from Kempten (figure 2, plate 3). Along with the shoulders, the elbows of the Kempten crucifix were once articulated—they have since been filled with plaster—so that when the effigy was placed in the tomb, its hands could be folded over its chest. The use of human hair and beard heightens the realism of a crucifix with movable arms from Bad Wimpfen (figure 22).[9]

Long forgotten, crucifixes with movable arms began to receive attention again in the 1960s.[10] Since then, scholars have naturally associated them with the other movable sculptures used in and around Holy Week.[11] On Palm Sunday, for example, a statue of Christ seated on an ass was processed through the streets as viewers scattered palm leaves before it in celebration of Christ's entry into Jerusalem (figure 23).[12] And on Easter, the resurrection was performed by raising a sculpture of the triumphant Christ from the sepulcher, as I described in Chapter I (figure 24). This same figure was used forty days later to dramatize Christ's ascension to heaven, when a rope was attached to a metal ring in the head of the sculpture by means of which it could be pulled up through an opening in the vaulting of the church (figure 25).[13] Once the sculpture had disappeared through this hole, roses, lilies, Eucharistic Hosts, and sometimes—much to the chagrin of the less theatrically minded—a burning effigy of the devil rained down from the same hole onto the congregation. Kirchmair did not approve:

> The blocke that on the aultar still, till then was seene to stande,
> Is drawne vp hie aboue the roofe, by ropes and force of hande....
> Then out of hande the dreadfull shape of Sathan downe they throw,
> Oft times with fire burning bright, and dasht a sunder tho,
> The boyes with greedie eyes do watch, and on him straight they fall,
> And beate him sore with rods, and breake him into peeces small.[14]

Entirely at odds with the hiding of images during Lent, sculptures like the Palm Sunday ass and the Resurrection figure made

Figure 22. Oswald Bockstorfer aus Memmingen, *Crucifix with Movable Arms* (1481) in the Evangelical Church in Bad Wimpfen am Berg, Germany, polychromed wood with human hair. (Photo: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg.)

Figure 23. Swabian, *Palm Sunday Ass from Veringendorf* (late 14th c.), polychromed wood, almost life size. Wurttembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart, Germany. (Photo: Andreas Praefcke.)

Figure 24. *The Resurrected Christ* from the Church of St. John the Baptist, Treherz, Germany, polychromed wood. (Photo: Andreas Praefcke.)

Figure 25. Nave vaulting with a hole (here covered) at the upper limit of the photograph, Church of St. Anna, Cloister Heiligkreuztal, Altheim-Heiligkreuztal, Germany. (Photo: Andreas Praefcke.)

the time around Easter particularly rich not just in images but in images—which "on the aultar *still*, till then were seene to stande" (my emphasis)—put into motion in paraliturgical performances.

The crucifix with movable arms, the Palm Sunday ass, and the Resurrection figure are all mobile in the sense that they can be *made to move*; they cannot move independently. But insofar as the crucifix represents the dead Christ, its movements differ from those of the other two. When the Palm Sunday ass was rolled through the streets of town and when the Resurrection figure was hoisted up through a hole in the vaulting of the church, the fiction was that they were moving of their own accord or, at least, not by means of any human intervention. For this reason, the ass and the Resurrection figure were moved with the help of ropes, wheels, and pulleys, and from a distance great enough to dissociate the mover from the moved: "A wooden Asse they haue," says Kirchmair, "and Image great that on him rides, / But vnderneath the Asses feete, a table broade there slides."[15] By contrast, when the crucifix was taken down from the cross and its arms were laid by its sides, the fiction (and the fact) was that it had no volition whatsoever. Because the fact of the crucifix's stillness coincided with its fiction, it could be handled directly; in fact, it needed to be handled directly since it was its handler who demonstrated its abject passivity.

In his 1697 account of a procession at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, Henry Maundrell, chaplain in Aleppo, describes a crucifix with movable arms: "It was an Effigies so contriv'd, that its Limbs were soft and flexible, as if they had been real Flesh: and nothing could be more surprising, than to see the two pretended Mourners bend down the Arms, which were before extended, and dispose them upon the Trunk, in such a manner as is usual in Corpses."[16] Maundrell marvels over just how *yielding* the sculpture's limbs appear to be.

Writing critically about Catholic ritual in 1534, Sebastian Franck describes the same type of Deposition less with awe than indignation: "On Good Friday before Easter one carries a crucifix around in a procession and lays a great dead man-image (*eyen gross gestorben*

Menschen-Bild) in a grave."[17] Franck positions himself as if outside the belief system that gives meaning to the ritual's gestures and words: "As if I were a heathen, I was greatly astonished by the Christian folly."[18] Pretending to simply describe the ritual, he shows how inadequate its clunky maneuvers are to the task of representing the mystery of Christ's sacrifice. Franck relies on the self-evidence of this disparity: he needs only to describe the proceeding, he implies; its inadequacy speaks for itself. For, the better the rite pictures the stillness of its historical character, the more attention it calls to the mere *objectness* of the images that represent him.

In the Deposition rite's insistence on the immobility of the dead Christ, Franck sees and asks his readers to see a humiliating spectacle of what the anonymous author of "An homily against the peril of idolatry" calls the "unmoveable image."[19] John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, likewise relies on the irrefutable deadness of the Good Friday effigy to make his iconoclastic point: "What resemblance hath the taking of the cross out of the sepulchre, and going a procession with it, with the resurrection of Christ?" asks Hooper in a pamphlet of 1547. "None at all: the dead post is as dead when they sing *Now he dieth not*, as it was when they buried it with *His place is made in peace*."[20]

Franck and Hooper discover an unconscious mocking of the "unmoveable image" in the Catholic ritual. Although the official explanations of the Deposition rite make no mention of this iconoclastic effect, the iconoclasts' habit of pointing to the image's immobility was too familiar in the late Middle Ages for the mocking implications of the Deposition rite to have gone unnoticed. The Deposition rite let the silence and stillness of the image "speak" for themselves—just as iconoclasts often did: "If you are God, speak"[21]; "if you are God, protect yourself"[22]; "but now may we see, / What Goddes they be, / Euen puppets, mammats and elfes: / Throw them downe thryse, / They can not aryse, / Not ones, to helpe them selues."[23] Unanswered, these taunts demonstrated that images can do nothing in their own defense. According to Franck and Hooper, the Deposition rite demonstrated much the same thing.

Mocking the Image

Several other rituals of the later Middle Ages likewise called attention to the inability of images to "aryse" and help themselves. These included the popular folk rituals of Dead Sunday, the ecclesiastical ritual known as the Humiliation, and the more spontaneous rituals that erupted periodically when images refused to comply with the wishes of the people who relied upon them.

On the fourth Sunday of Lent, which was known as Laetare Sunday or Dead Sunday (*Todtensonntag*), it was common in the Middle Ages and long after to conduct a ritual driving out of "Carnival," "Winter," or "Death," who was personified in the form of an effigy.[24] The similarities between the Deposition rite and the Driving Out of Death would have been readily apparent to late medieval churchgoers since the two rituals occurred each year within weeks of one another. Some versions of the Driving Out ritual even ended with a resurrection.[25] In Chrudim, where the effigy of Death was made of a *cross*—which was decorated with a head, mask, and shirt—the resemblance between the two rituals would have been particularly striking.[26]

The details of the Driving Out varied, but it generally involved the subjection of the effigy to a host of degradations, including taunting, drenching with water, stoning, befouling, beheading, and tearing to shreds. After which, the effigy was either flung into the neighboring village, burned, drowned, or—most notably for my purposes—buried, sometimes in a dung-heap.[27] Each of these acts had the double and somewhat self-contradictory effect of symbolically killing the image *and* demonstrating that it was always already dead—nothing but a defenseless thing. Usually little more than a sack of straw, the effigy was not simply a personification of Death; it was death embodied in the form of inanimate matter.

When James Frazer described these rituals more than a century ago, he characterized them as purification rites intended to protect against plague and other afflictions—to protect, in short, against death. It was for this reason, in his opinion, that the treatment of the puppet was so brutal: "the effigy of Death is often regarded with fear

and treated with marks of hatred and abhorrence. Thus the anxiety of the villagers to transfer the figure from their own to their neighbours' land."[28] In Radeberg, after a group of shouting and singing boys paraded the effigy through town, they threw it in a ditch and fled as fast as they could, believing that the last to flee would die that year.[29]

The Driving Out was sometimes explicitly associated with the banishing of idolatry. The Grimms cite the case of Königshain by Görlitz. Here the entire village made its way each Dead Sunday to a neighboring hill called the Todtenstein, where the image of a heathen god was said to have been worshipped. When they later returned to the village, they sang "we have driven out Death, we bring back Summer." "So it is not everywhere," the Grimms conclude, "that the banished idol represented Winter or Death in the abstract; in some cases it is still the *heathen divinity* giving way to Christianity, whom the people thrust out half in sorrow, and uttering songs of sadness."[30] The frequency with which Driving Out songs describe the gouging out of Death or Winter's eyes—a common form of iconoclasm—also suggests that the effigy was conceived of as an idol whose banishment prepared the way for the true religion: "Yes, yes, yes! Summer is here," goes a song from the Middle Rhine, "he scratches the eyes of Winter out."[31] Luther likewise implicitly links the Dead Sunday effigy with the "papist" idol in his satirical version of the Driving Out song, which begins "Now we drive the Pope out, / Out of Christ's church and God's house" and ends by ushering in Christ.[32]

If the Deposition rite shared certain features with the extra-ecclesiastical Driving Out of Death—including its iconoclastic overtones—it also resembled one of the Church's own rituals of image-mortification. Like the Deposition rite, this ritual involved the lowering of images to the ground. Intended to represent the humiliation of a community beset by war, plague, or other iniquity and to plead for God's mercy, the so-called Humiliation was conducted by lowering the crucifix or images of saints from their elevated positions onto the ground, where they were covered with thorns and left until they delivered whatever it was that was being

asked of them.[33] The Humiliation functioned not only as supplication but also, according to Patrick Geary and Lester Little, as a means of punishing and finally coercing recalcitrant images into answering prayers.[34] As with the Driving Out, the Humiliation had the double effect of degrading the image at one and the same time that it demonstrated that it was *already* a degraded thing, powerless to get up and defend itself.[35]

The punishment of uncooperative images also occurred spontaneously. Peasants, we are told, shouted and banged sticks on altars to rouse saints to action.[36] In the early sixteenth century, the Madonna of Foix was brutally thrown to the ground when she failed to miraculously produce the weather that had been demanded of her.[37] The monks of Wilton are said to have fallen into a rage when a casket containing the relics of St. Ywius refused to budge from where they had set it down: "They weep, wail, rip their clothing, tear their hair, wring their hands, and beat the reliquary shrine as Balaam struck his ass."[38] Unlike iconoclasts who championed changes in how images were used in churches, the people who committed these acts of aggression turned only temporarily against images they otherwise venerated. They did not reject sacred images altogether but rather deemed certain images under certain conditions worthy of punishment, humiliation, or even destruction. There was room to treat an image with indifference, to vent frustration at it, to use it to vent frustration at the powers that it represented, and to enjoy making a humiliating spectacle of its inability to defend itself, without entirely giving up a belief in the power of images.[39]

While ritual humiliations of images and spontaneous acts of aggression toward images could occur at any time, the Deposition rite and the Driving Out recurred annually when feelings about images (both positive and negative) would have been running particularly high thanks to the many images used in the paraliturgical rites staged around Easter. Iconoclasts found much to object to in the performances with moving images that marked this time of year. Kirchmair complains: "From Thurseday then till Easter come, the fondest toyes haue place Wherein these cathlikes think themselues,

great men of wondrous grace."[40] In a Dutch tract written in 1569 and translated into English under the title *The Bee hiue of the Romische Churche*, the Calvinist Philips van Marnix condemns the dramatizations of Christ's life that occurred in the days before Easter: "In summe, Christ hath not done anie thing in his death and passion but they do plaie and counterfeite the same after him, so trimlie and liuelie that no plaier nor iuggler is able to do it better."[41]

Disdain of this kind gave rise to a notable number of late medieval and Reformation iconoclasms in and around Holy Week.[42] On Holy Saturday of 1414, a Hussite interrupted the service in the Church of St. James in Prague and smeared the crucifix with excrement.[43] A 1415 judgment against a Waldensian sect in Bohemia reports that on Good Friday the heretics told the congregation: "today the whores and monks will play with the puppets and idols."[44] In 1466, a man was condemned to death by fire in Regensburg for having shot three times at the crucifix on Good Friday.[45] In 1520, a group of people ringing cow and sheep bells disturbed a procession celebrating the resurrected crucifix in the city of Pirna.[46] On Maundy Thursday of 1524, followers of the radical Thomas Müntzer attacked the Mallerbach Chapel and destroyed a miraculous image of the Virgin.[47] On Easter of that same year in Ammern bei Mühlhausen, a man ripped the crucifix from the hands of a priest as he lifted it from the sepulcher.[48] On Good Friday of 1528, iconoclasm erupted in churches in Basel, leading to the conversion of the city to the Protestant cause.[49] That same day in Augsburg, as the priest placed the Host in the sepulcher, a man showed the blessed bread his ass and was heard to shout in the direction of the monstrance: "Hey you, Christ, what are doing there in that little madhouse?"[50]

In and around Holy Week, iconoclasts were stirred to deflate the fantasy that images move of their own accord. They often did so by demonstrating the powerlessness of the image to defend itself against the insults and degradations to which they subjected it. But long before iconoclasts hurled their insults, a reaction against the fantasy of the moving image had been built into the (para)liturgy itself—a reaction that certain iconoclasts, including Franck and

Hooper, more or less recognized as such. In response to the hyperbolic imaging of God with moving toys, the Deposition rite made a spectacle of the image's wretched stillness and put it away in a box.

The Deposition rite was not aimed at reform and was certainly not intended to rid the Church of images. Nor was it intended to spur unresponsive images to action. Instead of either permanently banishing images or falling into a rage each time one failed to produce a desired miracle, the participants in the Good Friday rite set aside forty hours each year for a ritualized acknowledgment of the image's sustained failure to miraculously move of its own accord. Although the Deposition rite put the image away only temporarily, the object that emerged from the tomb on Easter was shadowed throughout the year by the memory of this rite—that is, the memory of the ritual moment in which the image of a dead man became a stark reminder of the image's own lack of life.

Vignette: Marcel Duchamp's Unhappy Readymade *(1919)*

In April 1919, Marcel Duchamp sent his sister Suzanne and her new husband Jean Crotti a wedding gift in the form of instructions for a readymade (figure 26). Duchamp would later describe the gift to Pierre Cabanne: "It was a geometry book, which he had to hang by strings on the balcony of his apartment in the rue Condamine; the wind had to go through the book, choose its own problems, turn and tear out the pages. Suzanne did a small painting of it, 'Marcel's Unhappy Readymade.' That's all that's left, since the wind tore it up. It amused me to bring the idea of happy and unhappy into the readymades, and then the rain, the wind, the pages flying, it was an amusing idea."[51] In one of the notes for his *Large Glass*, Duchamp had earlier written: "Make a sick picture or a sick Readymade."[52] That in the end he made an unhappy rather than a sick readymade suggests a preference for the slightly more anthropomorphic adjective.

The word *(mal)heureux* also has the advantage of affording Duchamp the positive affect of happiness along with its undoing. This doubleness corresponds to the double gesture of making and unmaking that structures the *Unhappy Readymade* and its particular

Figure 26. Marcel Duchamp, *Retouched Photograph of the Unhappy Readymade* for the *Box in a Valise* (1935–1941), 16.2×10.5cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection. © 2010 ARS, New York/ADAGP, Paris/Succession Marcel Duchamp. (Photo: PMA Photography Department.)

brand of seriality. In the photograph and painting Suzanne made to document it, the *Unhappy Readymade* has no text. When he retouched the photograph for inclusion in his portable miniature museum, the *Box in a Valise* (1935–1941), Duchamp added text but only the semblance of text, generic text—lines from any geometry book, open to any page. This lack of specificity is fitting since Duchamp had no say in and perhaps no knowledge of the book chosen by his sister and her husband nor in the problems and pages "chosen" by the wind. Moreover, what Suzanne and Jean Crotti and the wind happened to choose in April 1919 made for but one instantiation of the *Unhappy Readymade*, whose iterations are theoretically unlimited.

At the end of a long note that begins "Specifications for 'Readymades,'" Duchamp points to the seriality of the readymade work of art: "By planning for a moment to come (on such a day, such a date, such a minute), '*to inscribe* a readymade.'—The readymade can later be looked for. (with all kinds of delays)"—"*The important thing (then) is just* this matter of timing, this snapshot effect, like a speech delivered on no matter what occasion (but) *at such and such an hour.* It is a kind of rendez-vous.—Naturally inscribe that date, hour, minute (on the readymade), as *information.* also the serial characteristic of the readymade."[53] This reference to seriality is a surprising twist at the end of a full paragraph concerning the readymade's punctuality, that is, its temporal *singularity.* The readymade is caught somewhere between this singularity—the singularity of the moment of its induction into the category of Art—and the seriality of the mass-produced object. Elsewhere Duchamp warns against multiplying the number of readymades: "anything can become very beautiful if the gesture is repeated often enough; this is why the number of my 'ready-mades' is very limited."[54] Despite its "serial characteristic," Duchamp tells us, each readymade represents a singular act and the number of all readymades should be limited.

The *unhappy* readymade must necessarily be something of an exception to these rules, insofar as hanging up the geometry book creates it at the same time that it sets it on course to destruction. The *Unhappy Readymade* is a *double* "rendez-vous," marked with the

date and time of its making as well as an indeterminate-as-to-date-and-time-but-otherwise-certain *unmaking*. The unpredictability of wind and rain notwithstanding, the destruction of this object as per Duchamp's instructions is a foregone conclusion. So not only can the *Unhappy Readymade* be endlessly reproduced without becoming a multiple (of existing things); it must be reproduced if it is to continue to exist. Duchamp specifically sanctions reproduction as replacement in the case of the geometry book: "I liked the photograph of the Ready Made sitting there on the balcony," Duchamp told his sister. "When it falls apart you can replace it."[55]

An analogous logic of making-unmaking-remaking structures Man Ray's *Object to be Destroyed* (figure 27). A drawing of the *Object* published in 1932 has the following caption: "Cut out the eye from a photograph of one who has been loved but is seen no more. Attach the eye to the pendulum of a metronome and regulate the weight to suit the tempo desired.... With a hammer well-aimed, try to destroy the whole at a single blow."[56] These instructions might be glossed: create an image of a lost loved one, set it into motion, and then unleash your anger on this substitute for that missing person. As in the case of Duchamp's only slightly less anthropomorphic *Unhappy Readymade*, the making and unmaking of this biomechanical being are inseparable. The execution of the first step (creation) leads inexorably to the final step (destruction).

And again as with Duchamp's *Unhappy Readymade*, destruction would lead back to (re-)creation. According to Man Ray's autobiography, *Object to be Destroyed* met something close to the fate the artist had envisioned for it when a group of art students protesting Dada and Surrealism entered the 1957 exhibition at the Galerie de l'Institut in Paris where the metronome was on display. Although they failed to follow the artist's instructions exactly, they did begin "taking down the works and laying them carefully on the floor... After which they filed out in an orderly manner. But on the way one grabbed the metronome and disappeared with it."[57] The *Object to be Destroyed* was deposed and carried off—for all intents and purposes, destroyed. But it did not meet its end that day, since

Figure 27. Man Ray, *Object to Be Destroyed* (1964), replica of 1923 original, metronome with cutout photograph of an eye on pendulum, 22.5 × 11 × 11.6 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York, James Thrall Soby Fund. © 2010 Man Ray Trust/ARS, New York/ADAGP, Paris. (Photo: The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, New York.)

Man Ray used the insurance money grudgingly paid out to him for the lost work to buy a whole new stock of metronomes. These he did not hesitate to use as material for a whole new set of *Objects to be Destroyed*—which he called *Indestructible Objects. Indestructible Object* would be renamed several times in turn, before receiving its final and most fitting name, *Perpetual Motif*, to mark the fact that a readymade is too readily replaced to be irretrievably consigned to oblivion.[58]

In the sixteenth century, iconoclastic reformers deposed all but a handful of crucifixes with movable arms. The Deposition rite itself fell into desuetude thanks to the same Reformation that claimed its props.[59] But long before iconoclasts deposed these sculptures, their hinged shoulder joints indicated that they were, at an unspecified time, to be taken down from the cross. Liturgical manuals provided instructions on how and when this should occur, dictating that once a year the crucifix was to be handled in such a way that all could see how inert it was, lowered toward the earth, and put away in a box. These instructions might be glossed: create an image of a lost loved one, set it into the kind of motion that shows just how lifeless it is, and then unleash your hostility on this inanimate substitute for that missing person by banishing it from sight.

While the *Unhappy Readymade* and the *Object to be Destroyed* bear no evidence of the humiliating rituals for which they are destined, knowledge of which is transmitted through their titles and instructions alone, the crucifix with movable arms wears the sign of its annual ordeal on its sleeve in the form of wooden hinges. Equipped with the means of its own deposition—*Abthuung* is the word that Karlstadt uses; "pluck it down to the ground" is how Geoffrey Chamber puts it—the crucifix is ready and waiting to be put away by anyone who wants to do so.[60]

The crucifix with movable arms is made to be deposed—but only temporarily. Like the *Unhappy Readymade* and the *Perpetual Motif*, it is bound to reappear according to well-known formulas. The utterly mechanical, ticking regularity with which these three objects come and go does not in the least, however, diminish the emotional

response they elicit. All three anthropomorphic objects are laden with enough feeling to give the viewer a bit of sadistic pleasure. Their anthropomorphism lends poignancy to their mechanically predictable demise, while their replaceability frees the viewer to enjoy their humiliation and "destruction" with impunity. Each offers itself up in all its replaceable glory to the gratification of a viewer whose murderous fantasies it can sustain far more reliably—that is, perpetually—than any living being.